

DAY 1 - ARRIVAL

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1996

Too knackered to write (or spell!)
so will have to do so tomorrow.

I hope everyday isn't so busy!

DAY 2

Having obtained one of Matt's spare mugs from which I can drink tea that doesn't taste like the inside of a binliner as my thermos mug does, I can now start an attempt at this diary writing. It is quite an odd thing writing a diary you know someone is going to read, yet I can feel this is really just an extension of my usual diary - minus the gossip. I should point out it is 10:40 pm and this is the first chance I have had to sit down and chat to myself. The problem with all this camping business is everything takes so bloody long to do. The kettle alone takes 10 mins to boil and then there is only enough water for 2 cups. I don't mind really as it is all part of the fun of being on a campsite I suppose. It does remind you a little of what life is like without

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appliances for everything under the sun. Whilst hanging out on heskernick surveying settlements I suppose I feel more aware of the confines of existing on the hill because I am coming back to a windy hovel myself. Or perhaps I am just kidding myself - who knows. One of the things that struck me most about Bodmin was the noise. An area I had imagined wind swept and silent with nothing but a whistling wind (wrote twice in the same sentence - I'll never be a writer) was so loud. Living in central London has given me such a false view of what it was like to live in the countryside I had forgotten how loud nature can be. There are horses + cows + sheep making various sounds and sky larks - man are they noisy. It was Pippa who had to tell me they lived in the grass and not in trees. For someone who was brought up in the countryside I know bugger all about it to be honest.

The site is really most impressive - just massive amounts of stone everywhere. At first

I just didn't recognise any features it was just rocks everywhere. But then Barbara started pointing out enclosure walls snaking up and down the hillside and then I began to focus in more. It was so mad like putting my contact lenses in in the morning when you realise how badly your vision is because you can see so much clearer with them in and yet you have been stumbling around quite happily without them. Suddenly I could see walls and then circles of stones representing houses and walls and when Chris started talking with his 'story' of the hills I could recognise features miles away on other hills. I wonder if, had these not been pointed out to me, I would have been able to locate them for myself, or whether I would have stumbled over the hill and just seen it as 'a rocky bit' as I had originally shewed it. It was really just an introductory day - conflict between the 2 sides - the

hard-nosed archaeologists
with the demands for set
times and ardent digging
technics and the surveyors,
happy to amble over the
landscape for hours on end.

The man with the bagpipes
seemed quite crazy, but all
part of the mystical nature
of Beamin I suppose. I
shall have to take my
diary on site tomorrow and
write as I go as I really
am too exhausted to rabbit
on much further. - Until
tomorrow.

MAY 3

12:45

Second day on site and the weather is just right & sun but loads of wind so you don't sit and cook in it. We are back on the same settlement, Marilyn and I as Andrew has defected to the excavators camp. I know the intention is not to divide the two teams at work, but it is impossible when there are so many differences between the work going on which dictates things like start times and tea breaks. The southern site appears to be more windy than the west (but perhaps that is just today?) which might be a reason why the settlement switched, although no-one has yet explained why the western site comes after the southern.

Marilyn has almost finished planning the outer wall to our plan which Andrew meticulously (still can't spell) drew yesterday. I think he had a really hard time with 'rough estimates' and was dying to measure and level everything. Marilyn and I seem more capable of the rough drawings because of our lack of formal archaeological training.

1:30 LUNCH BREAK

Things are definitely heating up and people are getting quite aggressive with one another. Again I mention the conflict but it is really dominating things so far. It is very unsettling and I feel awkward and unhappy continuing the planning in the way we have started (minus levelling etc) knowing there are people all around who disapprove of what you are doing. Some of the people included on this dig seem really from such a different perspective you wonder why they are here!

As far as the actual ~~analysis~~ analysis of the site is going we are making slow progress. Marilyn + I thought we were doing fine but have since discovered we have missed off loads of annotation + all sorts of bits which apparently are essential. I can't see why levelling is so important on turfed ground. The thickness of grass in some places is different from others + that's got nothing to do with what was going on in the Bronze Age. But as Sue was saying this

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new approach is new and therefore needs explanation. It is clear to us actually doing it but may be most confusing to those who are traditionally trained - I can't decide but I wish someone would.

DAY 4

The sun is really relentless and I don't think I can cope if it gets much hotter. I have some strange burnt bits on my body where I have missed out putting sun tan lotion so I'm beginning to look like a strange species of dalmation. Last night we had a chat about the argument during the day at the pub and it put a better perspective on it. There were people from both camps there so it was quite evenly debating and it made me feel much better about the whole issue.

I spent the most of today on my knees staring through a mock wooden door frame. At first the concept sounds most bizarre + I had 'been warned' about this particular

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oddity associated with this dig I must admit I was highly sceptical as to the value of this exercise and offered to help partly because I was getting a bit bored of going from 'hut' to 'hut' and partly because I was dying to know what the huge fuss was about. But after a full day of orientating doorways and checking news I must admit I am totally won over. The pattern that these structures follow concerning view and size and entrance direction is remarkable and I enjoyed the opportunity of familiarizing myself with every 'hut'. Why the anti-doorways ~~to~~ lobby is so dismissive of this activity I can't understand especially considering that they are most comfortable with empirical data and the empirical data of this experiment clearly shows correlation between size, view etc.

On our rounds Chris Tilley also gave me a great idea for my individual study. His

suggestion that I should visit other settlement sites on Bogamin and approach them ~~asking~~ similar questions to the ones we have been using on Leskernick and see if there are ^{any} other comparable sites. Whether he suggested this because he genuinely believes it is a valuable topic for research I would find interesting and worthy of tackling or whether it is something that needs doing + I would be a good dog's body to send off + start the task which needs doing sooner or later I must admit I have yet to decide. Perhaps it is a bit of both.

The evening was most civilised constituting a major discussion ~~around~~ Wayne + Jill's tents into archaeology, life the universe + everything (which I can privately admit I probably only grasped a $\frac{1}{3}$ of). It was great to spend time with interesting people who have a passion for what they are doing, such a change from the mentally dead

DAY 5

Day off and a trip to Timagket - what a dump. A ~~terrible~~ tourist trap from hell full of tacky souvenirs and far American tourists. It is amazing how one's opinion of situations can change.

The Castle was a terribly ruff place - another English Heritage disaster. I feel terribly prejudiced against the organization now and I am sure it is all the fault of these archaeologists around me.

Another civilised evening - this time at Pippa + Matt's tent. I really find the people on this dig fascinating. They are all such a weird bunch and yet all have so much about them. I don't think I could live in the same house with any of them as they all have peculiarities but they a great bunch of people to spend a few weeks with.

DAY 6

The weather was perfect. Just enough sun to keep you warm and a breeze to keep it fresh. More hut ~~excavation~~ evaluation today + Penni + I have got our method sorted now. It has taken a while but we seemed to have cracked it. We've yet to see how accurate it is deemed to be but so far we feel content with it. It's great to be working with Penni, especially after meeting her in Cumbria last year. Despite her lack of formal training, 10 years of Stevenson ground and she's by far ^{of the} one expert on the dig.

I've just thought of a better way of describing how I felt about the stores on Heskernick when I first arrived whilst talking to Jo. It was like staring at one of those magic eye pictures when at first all you can see is a coloured splotch and then your eyes focus in on the image within and suddenly the

picture is a huge 3 dimensional image you can't comprehend you could have failed to recognise 5 mins earlier.

DAY 7 - Sunday

The descent of PPS on to our site seems to have put the fear of God into everyone. People insist on beavering away and ensuring they are seen to be "doing" something all day (myself included). And yet looking at this bunch of old dears, it is hard to imagine why they are so influential. I do recognise a name or two, like T. Champion, but the rest seem quite unextraordinary. I think this is a measure of the general tentativeness of the project. Because these ideas being developed on the dig and the novel approach to interpreting the past, the whole thing has a very insecure feel to it. Although Chris, Sue and Barbara are still feeling their way around this approach (as much as Chris would like to appear definite and sure of everything) and so cannot be

expected to be wholly confident in all they say and do, the insecurity that comes across is quite apparent. Whether it is beneficial or detrimental to the group as a whole is yet to be seen. I don't quite know if I like knowing them as ordinary people or whether I would have preferred to have continued a teacher / student relationship. You get to know their faults as well as the good aspects and so they no longer can sit on the pedestal you have placed them. I feel like I've lost some heroes in a way, people you couldn't touch but just admire and now that has all gone. But I know them better as human people and maybe that is more real and more valuable. It will be interesting to see what happens when I leave this dig and turn up again in September as I have courses with all 3.

DAY 8

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Pissy awful weather so we only got as far as Barbara's catavan. Again, because we spent the day discussing and not actually doing things like measuring rocks and climbing hills and digging trenches, I get the impression we were considered by a few to have done nothing. I suppose there are those you'll never convince.

The debate was quite fascinating and made me realise now this whole research is more about ourselves than some Bronze Age Structures. There are some real clash of personalities and it is a scramble to see who is the strongest, which is Wayne every time. He is very articulate and can express himself much more clearly than anyone else (and he's got the loudest voice which helps) but like Dad he can convince you of how strongly or clearly he understands something without really being so sure inside. You just believe him because he is so convincing which can be dangerous at

times. Gill and I had a great chat whilst preparing dinner for the board. Learning more about her explains a lot, showing that life history and past can seriously mold a persons present

DAY 9 - Tuesday

Shitty weather but we haven't spend another day on the camp site for fear of the scorn we would receive from the excavators. In the end we drove part way up to the site but spotting Sue + Chris G in a car coming in the opposite direction I made every effort to turn back. If they weren't staying up there there was no way I was going! It was decided that we were to have the rest of the day as our day off - cheers then.

The cultural elite went to the Tate at St Ives. The macho elite (Matt) climbed Rough Tor in the rain + mist; the comfort elite

Stayed in their caravans and the rest of us went to bed as it is all you can do whilst lying horizontal in a tent (unless you have someone to play with, which again is hardly the practice of a camp site.) Phoned Nick and he is at home; this means either a) he's been fired again or b) he's skiving + will be fired soon. If I manage to ever pass my 3rd year it will be a true miracle.

Wayne + Gary cooked up an amazing feast for supper and then we all got highly pissed in the bar. Kira has arrived but seems not to be slotting in as easily as the others have done! I hope she'll be o.k.

DAY 10 - Wednesday

The 'wonder weather' has returned and we are all saved from the misery of the mists. The walk to site was quite breathtaking as the shadow of the stones caused by the low clouds make Rough Tor, Ceddler Tor + Maiden Tor look quite magical. For the first time today I noticed the way the millions of quartz pieces in heskernick rock really sparkle as diamonds do making it appear a very sacred or special place. I can't quite find the words to explain it but today it felt more friendly and deeply spiritual than before. - that was until THE ROW.

It's been brewing for ages but Wayne has finally been told his is not the final and only say in matters. Don't get me wrong off site I feel very fond of him and enjoy his company but on site he can be an obstinant know it all who won't budge an inch for anyone (except Chris, Sue or Barbara). Gill finally let rip and told him not to be

so damn bossy and to listen to what others had to say for a change. He has been sulking ever since. The row, though short was very contentious and seems to have divided the surveying team just a little more. I tried to escape & go + take my photos (at bloody last) but ended up being frowned at by all those labouriously digging away who obviously thought I was wasting even more precious time which could have been spent excavating. To be honest I am so bored of hells. There are only so many you can do before you lose the excitement and then you're stuffed. Sometimes I think this is not an archaeological dig at all but a huge social experiment run by Chris + Barbara (as anthropologists presiding). There is so much gossip flying around (it is turning into a terrible social disease eating into the bonds of the group). Having had the

blow up over hut 39 and whether to plan now or let the excavators get on with it we spent the afternoon in 2 groups looking at boundaries + enclosures. We were going to 'check' site plans + interpretations but Penni wasn't available. I think this checking idea is a BAD thing. It's not about checking the facts of the situation at all, (as much as I think Chris + Barbara truly think it is), it's about who was BEST or at least that is what it is turning into and I so don't want to get into that.

The teams we had for checking the enclosures were terrible and I nominated them (how could I have been so deaf!). Chris + Wayne (Mr + Mr dominant and ~~good~~ self assured and well-read) with Marilyn + I who aren't so sure of anything. I felt so untreaded during the whole afternoon when 4.00pm rolled around and I could set off for ~~the~~ Black Tor! I was off on the dot. As it was the car

exhaust packed-in and the
Cornish roads were too
much for my map
reading ~~set~~ skills + I never
got there. How I'm
ever going to sort this
damn individual shedyat
I don't know.

Henry mentioned some-
thing when I picked him
up from Bodmin Parkway -
he asked if everyone
went to the pub of an
evening together. We don't.
And the reason we don't
is because of those caravans
Those in tents have to go to
the pub or wherever
because otherwise it is
lying horizontal in your
tent all night whereas
those in the caravans
need never leave, and
there's no way we
could ever pitch up and
join them as the elite is
already established.

This is just one social
experiment, I'm sure of it!!!

DAY 11

Last day on site, and I was half happy half sad to be leaving it. It is certainly an odd place. Sometimes I can feel the happiness people keep associating with hushernick but sometimes I ~~get~~ sense something else. It will be interesting to see how the digs progress over the next four years + what is uncovered or revealed about the place.

Had a chance to go to the Humber and Cradock moor in the afternoon. No chance for personalities to explode as we were zigzagged across the moor by a man who knew all there was to know about the place in great detail.

I certainly feel my eyes have been opened more by my time on hushernick. When we were being dragged across Cradock moor I felt much more at ease recognising features in the landscape.

Another meal all together, around the tents end this time. Nice to see everyone together (well, except the excavators, Mike + the mechanics but I can't please everyone)

one last time before leaving.

It's always strange departing from these situations. People share their most intimate secrets with you when they hardly really know you, and you will most probably never see you again.

Weskernick has meant quite a lot to me, despite being such a short trip. When people talked of archaeology being more about understanding yourself than understanding what the past was like, I ~~never~~ never really comprehended what they meant. Now, I think I do.